



Institutionalizing inter-disciplinary undergraduate community-based participatory research courses: Critical questions for institutional practice

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Summary

Research in the area of community engagement in higher education supports the benefits of such activity on the community, faculty, and students. A faith-based research university and Carnegie-engaged institution in a large mid-western city is implementing a model for inter-disciplinary undergraduate Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) courses that respond to local issues of pressing community concern. An inter-disciplinary, public health course, entitled Community-based Research, Advocacy and Service in Healthcare (CRASH), was collaboratively envisioned by faculty of the university's health systems management program in the school of nursing and the program manager for service-learning and CBPR. The goal of this research project was to evaluate student, faculty, and community partner benefits and to begin to identify how such courses can be institutionalized within the organization.

A model for a course that supports community engagement to address significant public health concerns is viable. However, organizational support for community engagement and inter-disciplinary teaching is required for their long-term sustainability. Thus, critical questions regarding organizational structure, inter-departmental cooperation, incentives and the adequacy of resources on faculty participation, student engagement and community partner benefit must be further explored.

The purposes of this presentation are two-fold: 1) to present the impact an undergraduate applied research course focused on the public health problem of childhood obesity has on its faculty, students, and community partner; and 2) to discuss the influence of existing institutional policies and practices and the need for change on the sustainability of these types of courses.

References

There were no references provided with this proposal.